

April 2009



The Current ACA Great Rivers Newsletter

ACA Great Rivers Cluster Meetings Return

The third annual ACA Great Rivers Cluster Meetings were held on March 3, 2009 in Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas/Missouri. Each location had a great day of conversation. A special thanks to each of the host camps!

Iowa Cluster Report: Nineteen people enjoyed a brisk winter day at YMCA Camp Wapsie outside of Coggon Iowa for the ACA Iowa Cluster meeting! It was a great turnout with many areas of Iowa represented. Here are some of the topics covered:

- ACA's 20/20 Vision-what it is and how we are moving toward it.
- Section Delegate Becky Godfrey reported on the discussions and task group reports that were part of the ACA National conference.
- What are the things that keep us up at night? Teaching staff how to make friends when they are not developing those skills themselves. Spring program hires.
- Helping boards think in new ways. Figuring out how to run your camp at capacity. What are the characteristics of a high quality camp? Losing grant money. Seeking accreditation for the first time. Camping in an e-society. Matching parents to the information they need.
- Shared Training events.
- Brainstormed topics for future Education Sessions that the Section will sponsor.

And finally we had a great tour of beautiful Camp Wapsie. We especially enjoyed their great hospitality and Canadian Goose activity! Thanks Camp Wapsie and thanks to the many folks who came and made this cluster meeting a great success!



Kansas Cluster Meeting: We had 20 camp professionals from all over Kansas and one camp in Missouri attend the cluster meeting at Prairie Star Ranch near Williamsburg, KS. We talked about highlights from the National conference, discussed the 20/20 vision and how we can help reach it. Lunch was provided by Prairie Star Ranch which was a wonderful mix of sandwiches and soup. In the afternoon, we held an open forum and talked about staff training, Facebook, cell phones and shared information about our facilities in hopes we can make referrals to other camps if we have inquiries that we can not fill. We ended with an optional tour of Prairie Star Ranch.



Nebraska Cluster Meeting: Girls Scout Camp Catron staff were great hosts to the Nebraska Cluster meeting. There were 17 camp professionals who were able to attend the day of conversation and brainstorming. Hot topics included funding sources, safety issues, staffing, staff training, Internet use and working with executives who do not understand camp. ACA topics discussed also included what's next with the ACA's 20/20 Task Force. It was a great day!



From Robyn Ratcliff, the ACA Great Rivers Section President

Imagine that the ACA Great Rivers section is a rock band. We've got drummers, groupies, lead singers, roadies, all of the personnel and attitudes and abilities that make up a dynamic, talented rock band. We've even got a drummer. And he does his best to stay out of jail. Let's call him Jim.

We are an excellent rock band. We love what we do. When we're on stage in a dark, crowded venue, people can't help but dance. Our albums top the charts, and our fans are loyal and devoted. There may even be a couple who have "ACA" tattoos. Or, well, maybe not.

Now, imagine that our very successful, rowdy rock band has to play a gig at the nursing home every Tuesday. Here's what I'm getting at: ACA's 20/20 vision is going to help us--the Great Rivers section--by letting us concentrate on what we do best: rocking. Not nursing home outreach. In this case, rocking means providing education, standards, and local services--like mentoring and legislative monitoring--to camps.

The "nursing home" stuff is tax reporting, financial management, human resources issues, legal and insurance issues: all of those things that our section board currently has to do that take time away from what we want to be doing: playing with our fans.

This is one way to think about how ACA's new national 20/20 vision is going to help our section. They're going to cover that weekly nursing home gig for us, and let us concentrate on what we do best.

In February, Anne Snyder, Becky Godfrey, Jim Cherry, DD Gass and I represented our Great Rivers rock band at the national delegate meeting. We learned a lot more about the 20/20 vision, about ACA's national media initiatives including a commercial featuring some Hollywood stars. We talked and listened and envisioned the exciting future of ACA.

We should all be proud to be fans of a band--I mean an organization--that is willing to risk its current comfort for its future impact. ACA's bold moves now with the 20/20 vision will position camps and camping for greater success in the years to come--serving more children, youth and adults and reaching the world with the message of our important movement.

So--keep your eye out for new structures and exciting emphases that will impact the work we all do. Keep talking and listening and know that you are a part of an amazing time in the life of an amazing organization. 20/20, here we come!

Rock on, Robyn

ACA 20/20 Vision

The ACA Board of Directors described a *Preferred Future* for ACA and the camp community: The 2020 Vision. This is an exciting, and robust vision critical to the future of the camp community, youth development, and families. Following is how they describe the *Desired Future* for ACA the Organization?

1. ACA would be an organization that shares and embraces a common vision and mission.
2. ACA would recognize the significant challenge of influencing our complex culture and would mobilize its collective resources across the country to advance the success of the whole.
3. ACA would have a strong delivery system capable of providing relevant services to a broad range of users, including camp professionals, parents, and others interested in the camp experience.
4. ACA would have contemporary and dynamic strategies designed to maximize and mobilize all appropriate resources. (fiscal, human, knowledge)
5. ACA would have a strong brand position to facilitate the brokering of critical internal as well as external relationships.
6. ACA would have both a national and a local presence.
7. ACA would be recognized by the public as the authority on the camp experience.
8. ACA would have unified operational processes and procedures to maximize efficacy and desired outcomes and minimize confusion and competition.
9. ACA would recognize the importance of personal responsibility and accountability and the power of collective action.
10. ACA would be driven by the commitment to advance the value of the mission and vision, even in instances where the choices are difficult and sacrifice may be called for.

Read more about this vision, at www.acacamps.org/2020vision.

ACA Great Rivers Section Well Represented at National Conference

Orlando, Florida was a wonderful location for a conference in February and twenty-six members of the Great Rivers section attended! The ACA National Conference was filled with informative sessions, relevant new ideas and terrific speakers. Popular sessions included those sharing new program ideas, staff training tips, dealing with bullying, using social networking/Web 2.0 sites to engage and train staff, and sessions on characteristics of millennial-aged staff and how best to work with them.



Most of the Great Rivers Section members attending the ACA National Conference came to the section gathering on the first night.



The conference started out with the delegate session. The Great Rivers representatives were Robyn Ratcliff, Anne Snyder, Becky Godfrey, DD Gass and Jim Cherry. The main focus of the delegate sessions was discussing the 20/20 Task Force recommendations and gaining input from the participants. The ACA national Web site has information about how

the organization can reach out to other camp professionals to strengthen the outreach and effectiveness of our camping programs. The 20/20 vision has been a topic at our section annual conference and cluster meetings. If you have questions about the ACA 20/20 vision, contact Robyn Ratcliff or one of the other delegates.

ACA Healthy Camp Study Enrollment Now Open

Want to gain a powerful risk management tool for identifying and assessing injuries and illness at your camp? Camps can now enroll in Year 4 of the Healthy Camp Study. Participation is FREE, confidential, and it's okay if you didn't participate in years 1-3. You'll devote about twenty minutes each week to enter data into an easy online system. Each participating camp receives a detailed camp-specific report analyzing the injuries and illnesses of that camp, along with a national report for comparison. Become one of the hundreds of camps benefiting from this important study. To enroll, go to www.acacamps.org/research/enhance/healthy_camp_enroll.php.

New ACA Camp Outcomes Measures to Target Decision-Making and Problem Solving

This summer, the ACA Not-For-Profit Council's generous support will allow ACA to develop and pilot two new outcomes' measures focusing on decision-making and problem-solving. The Council has been instrumental in the development of ACA's Youth Outcomes Battery (YOB) for day and resident camps. Seven outcomes measures and analysis templates were created in 2006 and a new Affinity for Nature measure was developed last summer. All ACA outcomes measures are reliable and valid, age appropriate, and have been tested in camps. For information on the YOB, please visit the research Web page: www.ACAcamps.org/research. Any camp interested in serving as a pilot camp this summer for the development of the problem-solving and decision-making tools, please contact Deb Bialeschki, dbialeschki@ACAcamps.org.

ACA Camp Business Operations Report: 2009 Is Hot Off the Press!

Access the most recent budget and finance data for camps on the ACA Web site. Questions this year included scholarship information, discounts, marketing strategies used, revenue sources, weekly fees, expenditures, profitability, and more. For ease of application, there are two sets of findings: one for resident camps and one for day camps. Each set (resident/day) includes:

- Succinct narrative of the summary of findings.
- Contents page of all the break-outs for the data tables.
- Breakouts that include sponsorship, region, camper days, gross revenue, and profit margin.
- Appendix that provides information on the way the data were collected and analyzed.

To view the report, go to: www.acacamps.org/research/improve/2009_business_operations.php

Standards Update

Sex Offender Website Name Change

All camps are required to check all staff annually HR-4A (Mandatory) with the national sex offender registry. There is a new website address www.nsopw.gov/. Camps that are hiring companies/agencies to do background checks will want to verify that the check includes the national sex offender registry.

Attention Camps with New Directors

If there is a new director at your camp and you are not scheduled for a visit in 2009, the Great Rivers section strongly recommends the director take the Basic Standards Course. This is available on line. Contact Linda Du Brul, Standards Chair, at n0imy@arri.net for information on how you can register for this course. Remember, when you sign the annual Statement of Compliance, you are agreeing to meet the ACA standards. The online course is a great way to get new staff up to speed.

Camps to be Visited in 2009

If your camp was last visited in 2006, you are due for a visit next summer. You should have received information from Linda DuBrul about your coming visit. If you are not sure when you were last visited, email Linda Du Brul, Standards Chair at n0imy@arri.net. (The second character is a zero). Your camp will need to do three things in 2009—pay your service fees, sign your annual statement of compliance, and attend a standards training. Be sure your contact information is up to date. You can do this online at www.ACAcamps.org. or go to www.acacamps.org/login/logindetails.php. You will need to know your ACA member number and password.

Trainings

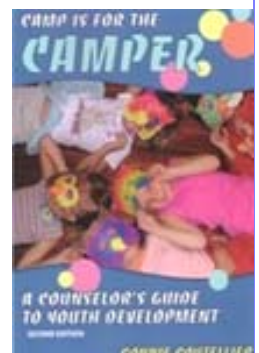
ACA Great Rivers Annual Conference

Plan now to attend the annual conference next year—November 9-12, 2009 at Carol Joy Holling Camp and Conference Center, near Ashland, Nebraska. Watch the Web site www.acagreatrivers.org for more information. If you have ideas or interested in presenting, please contact Don Enger, Great Rivers Education Chair, at enger@crmetroymca.org.

e-Institute Training Site

ACA's e-Institute is a online learning system designed for child and youth development audiences—from camp professionals to afterschool staff to community based program leaders. The e-Institute provides a mechanism for personal professional development and for training large groups of people and facilitates learning via both self-directed courses and live meetings. Certificates are available for all courses and CEU are available for selected courses. See the ACA Web Site for more details, www.acacamps.org. The courses are listed below.

- Criminal Background Checks—Dispelling the Myths and Confronting the Realities
- Camp Administrator 101: Preparing for Your New Role
- Communicating in a Time of Crisis: Are You Prepared?
- Designing Quality Youth Programs
- Camp Business and Finance
- Camp is for the Camper Online Training Program
- Injury and Illness Prevention e-Courses
- Creating Positive Youth Outcomes
- ACA's e-Standards Course



Looking Forward to the 2010 ACA National Conference

Plans are well underway for our 2010 national conference, February 16-19 at the Denver Hyatt at the Colorado Convention Center. The 2010 conference will combine excellent education opportunities with the 100th Anniversary celebration of ACA. Mark your calendar!

News of Our Members

New this Year!!

Nebraska Girl Scout Council had an opportunity to purchase an island on the Platte River near their Camp Maha site. This is a wonderful opportunity to expand program space. Campers will be able to canoe to the island to cook-out, stay overnight and participate in environmental and outdoor programming.



YMCA Camp Kitaki is expanding on their theme of BIG FUN. This year, they will have the BIG rocking chair, BIG Tyke, life-sized games like Mancala, Human Foosball, a super-sized hammock and a BIG canoe (14 passenger). See their Web site for more information, www.ymcalincoln.org/kitaki.

Eastern Nebraska 4-H Camp has a new Odyssey Course this year. Campers registering for a specialty week, will experience eight team events 30 feet off the ground on this awesome course. They will continue the challenge by going down all the zip lines in camp, crossing the high wires, climbing the climbing wall and rappelling down the tower! Then campers will be able to travel to Lincoln where they will scale the 50-foot-tall "Alpine Tower" and swing on the Giant Swing at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln's Outdoor Adventures' Challenge Course.



Also new this year, Jim Cherry gave in and was convinced by his family that he did need a cell phone. He showed off his phone at the Iowa Cluster meeting, and the ACA Great Rivers Section Board Meeting.

Cindy Findley, former director of Camp Tanglefoot in northern Iowa, is now doing consulting for the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. You can view the programs she has designed at www.inhf.org/experitors-intro.htm.

Camp 2 Grow: Environmental Leadership Program

ACA is pleased to announce a new Environmental Leadership Program available through the Lilly Endowment Inc. funded Camp 2 Grow Project. The Environmental Leadership Program is a leadership course that teaches middle and high-school aged youth fundamental leadership knowledge and skills in a nature-based setting. The nucleus of the course is the LifeKnowledge® program, a cutting-edge leadership curriculum designed to be integrated into a typical camp schedule and completed within a two-week period. Camps can customize the Environmental Leadership Program by selecting lessons most appropriate to achieve camp-specific goals. For more information, go to www.acacamps.org/camp2grow/.

ACA Web Site Great Resource for Media and Parents

The ACA National Web site is a great resource to share with those who have questions about the value of camp, the ACA standards, expert advice about sending a child to camp and many other questions. Two articles were recently in the USA Today newspaper, and press releases have been sent about the value of the camp experience. The media can find national camp information at www.acacamps.org/media_center. Parents can find answers to many questions about choosing the right camp for their child at www.CampParents.org.

Legislative Update—by Brad North

ACA Public Policy Page

The American Camp Association has a Public Policy page. On that page, camp professionals can keep track of issues related to legislation from the federal government and from each state. Be sure to visit www.acacamps.org/publicpolicy regularly to keep updated.

Pool and Spa Safety Act

The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act. (15 USC 8001) goes into affect December 8, 2008, Go to the Web site to get the full bill as it was signed in to law: www.cpsc.gov/pssa.pdf . Scroll down to get to the Title XIV Pool and Safety section. Following are some excerpts:

1. The State requires by statute— The Federal Government has set minimum requirements for each state.
 - The enclosure of all outdoor residential pools and spas by barriers to entry that will effectively prevent small children from gaining unsupervised and unfettered access to the pool or spa;
 - That all pools and spas be equipped with devices and systems designed to prevent entrapment by pool or spa drains;
2. In general—In establishing additional minimum State law requirements for swimming pools and spas under subsection (a)(1), the Commission shall require, at a minimum, one or more of the following (except for pools constructed without a single main drain):
 - SAFETY VACUUM RELEASE SYSTEM.—A safety vacuum release system which ceases operation of the pump, reverses the circulation flow, or otherwise provides a vacuum release at a suction outlet when a blockage is detected, that has been tested by an independent third party and found to conform to ASME/ANSI standard A112.19.17 or ASTM standard F2387, or any successor standard.
 - SUCTION-LIMITING VENT SYSTEM.—A suction-limiting vent system with a tamper-resistant atmospheric opening.
 - GRAVITY DRAINAGE SYSTEM.—A gravity drainage system that utilizes a collector tank.
 - AUTOMATIC PUMP SHUT-OFF SYSTEM.—An automatic pump shut-off system.
 - DRAIN DISABLEMENT.—A device or system that disables the drain.
 - OTHER SYSTEMS.—Any other system determined by the Commission to be equally effective as, or better than, the systems described in subparagraphs (A) through (E) of this paragraph at preventing or eliminating the risk of injury or death associated with pool drainage systems.
3. That pools and spas built more than 1 year after the date of the enactment of such statute have—
 - More than one drain;
 - One or more unblockable drains; or
 - No main drain.
4. Every swimming pool and spa that has a main drain, other than an unblockable drain, be equipped with a drain cover that meets the consumer product safety standard established by section 1404; and
5. That periodic notification is provided to owners of residential swimming pools or spas about compliance with the entrapment protection standards of the ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 performance standard, or any successor standard.

FBI Criminal Data Base

The next one I have comes from the ACA website: <http://www.capwiz.com/acacamps/callalert/index.tt?alertid=11320951> . This bill will help all camps by gaining access to the FBI criminal data base. Please go to this link and contact your senators and representatives.

Missouri Health Providers

The following link is legislation that has been introduced in the Missouri House of Representatives: <http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills091/biltxt/intro/HB00371.htm>. HB 37: Adds medical practitioners, providing services at a summer camp, to the list of health care providers for whom the State Legal Expense Fund is available for payment of certain claims against a provider.

ACA Great Rivers Section Board

ACA Great Rivers Section Web Site:
www.acagreatrivers.org

Section Executive: Rev. Jim Cherry:
E-mail: executive@acagreatrivers.org
Telephone: 641-927-4428

President: Robyn Ratcliff, Girl Scouts
E-mail: robynratclif@girlscoutsksmo.org

Vice President of Development: H. Lee Walz, United Methodist
E-mail: lwalz@moumethodist.org

Vice President of Program: Barb Collins, YMCA Camp Kitaki
E-mail: bcollins@ymcalincoln.org

Secretary: Anne Snyder, YMCA Camp Wood
E-mail: aws1155@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Tom Neppi
E-mail: tom@nepplandscapearchitecture.com

Standards Chair: Linda DuBrul, retired
E-mail: n0imy@arrl.net

Education Chair: Don Enger, YMCA Camp Wapsie
E-mail: enger@crmetroyymca.org

Membership Chair: (currently vacant)

Legislation: Brad North
E-mail: director@campgalileemo.org

Complaint Resolution: David Sherry, YMCA
E-mail: david.sherry@dmymca.org

Public Relations: DD Gass, Camp Fire USA
E-mail: dd.gass@campfireusa.org

Member At Large: Lynn Pollitt, Girl Scouts
E-mail: lpollitt@girlscoutsnebraska.org

Nominating: Becky Godfrey
E-mail: yerfdogs@yahoo.com

Update Your ACA Information!

When was the last time you checked to see if ACA's database has correct information about your contact information or the correct information for your camp? Did you know that you can go into your database and make corrections?

The webpage for doing this is www.acacamps.org/login/login/details.php You will find instructions for how to access your personal information. It is very important that this information is kept up-to-date. More and more communication is dependent upon having an accurate email address.

For your camp it is important to have the correct contact person listed so that critical communications regarding standards and accreditation do not go astray. Take a couple of minutes today to check the accuracy of your database information.

Share Your Training Dates

If you are planning training events that could be attended by other camp professionals, please send your information to our Section Executive, Jim Cherry. Jim sends out regular communications with members and the information will also appear in future newsletters. E-mail your information to executive@acagreatrivers.org.